

FACT SHEET



***Tri-County Public Airport
Herington, Kansas***

September 1999

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 has completed an Expanded Site Investigation/Remedial Investigation (ESI/RI) of the contaminated groundwater and drinking water wells in rural Herington, Morris County, Kansas, at the Tri-County Public Airport and the surrounding area. The site was once known as the Herington Army Air Field. Well samples indicated the presence of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the groundwater at levels above public drinking water standards, also known as maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). The EPA and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) are providing bottled water or water treatment to those residences whose drinking water source exceeds the MCL for trichloroethylene (TCE), carbon tetrachloride and/or ethylene dibromide (EDB).

BACKGROUND

The Herington Army Air Field (HAAF) was utilized by the Department of Defense (DOD) between 1942 and 1947. In 1948, the federal government transferred the property to the city of Herington. The city owned the site from 1948 until 1979, when the site was transferred to the Tri-County Public Airport Authority. In addition to the use of the site by the Army, the city, and the Airport Authority, it has been leased to numerous other entities who have used it for industrial purposes. In 1998, the Tri-County Public Airport Authority dissolved, and the site ownership has now been transferred back to the city of Herington.

Beginning in 1995, investigations of the former HAAF and the surrounding area have been conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the KDHE, and the EPA. Several VOCs, including trichloroethylene (TCE), carbon tetrachloride, and ethylene dibromide were detected in groundwater as were fuel-related chemicals such as: benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, and xylene. Samples taken from residential wells located north and northwest of the site indicated VOC contamination above the MCLs. TCE was not found in the two Tri-County Public Airport water supply wells. TCE is commonly used as an industrial solvent.

SITE UPDATE

The ESI/RI field work was conducted in two phases which included sampling of the Tri-County Public Airport property (on-site) and the surrounding area (off-site). The study of soil contamination included the analysis of 312 soil samples. The study of ground water contamination included the sampling of 40 monitoring wells both on and off-site and 46 water supply wells in the surrounding area. In addition, 18 surface water samples were collected and 9 samples were taken from area springs.

Sampling results showed the presence of TCE and 1,2-dichloroethene (DCE) in the surface and subsurface soils. The contaminated soils include three areas on the Tri-County Public Airport property. It is likely that waste disposal practices and releases from manufacturing operations led to the contamination of the soils in these areas. The results of monitoring well sampling showed that TCE was present in three different aquifers (underground water sources) and is migrating to the northwest of the airport. TCE was detected in 25 of the 46 water supply wells and the concentration of TCE in 22 of the samples exceeded the drinking water maximum contaminant level of 5 microgram per liter (ug/l). The results of the spring sampling verified the presence of TCE in several area springs.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The EPA is conducting ongoing quarterly sampling of monitoring wells, water supply wells, and springs along Clarks Creek. The remaining sampling will take place in December 1999 and March 2000. Results of the sampling will be sent directly to property owners who had samples collected on their property.

The EPA has initiated discussions regarding possible future activities with the KDHE and parties potentially responsible for the contamination at the Tri-County Public Airport property and the surrounding area. The EPA or KDHE will provide additional information to the public as it becomes available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The ESI/RI report for the Tri-County Public Airport Site, dated June 1999, is available for public viewing at the Herington Public Library, 102 S. Broadway, Herington, Kansas, during normal business hours.

If you have questions about this fact sheet or need additional information about this site, please contact:

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